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Testimony of Garvin G. Ambrose, Esq., State Victim Advocate
Submitted to the Insurance and Real Estate Committee
Tuesday, February 25, 2014

Good day Senator Crisco, Representative Megna and distinguished members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee. For the record, my name is Garvin Ambrose and I am the Victim Advocate for the State of Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony concerning:

Raised House Bill No. 5246, An Act Concerning Surety Bail Bond Agents

I would like to thank the Insurance Department, as well as the members of the General Assembly, for improving the operation of our Surety Bail Bond Agents within the last few years. Section 3 of Raised House Bill No. 5246 is another step in the right direction. Section 3 will require that persons licensed as surety bail bond agents receive continuing education to ensure that surety bail bond agents remain up to date on laws, regulations, obligations and other factors that are impacted by their profession.

The Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA), as an independent state agency responsible for the protection and promotion of the rights of crime victims throughout the state, has received complaints throughout the years from victims of domestic violence that involve surety bail bond agents providing a "ride home" to individuals that were bailed out of jail by the agents. In most domestic violence arrests, law enforcement officers impose non-financial conditions of release on an arrestee, to ensure a victim's safety. One such condition is that the arrestee not return to the dwelling or have no contact with the victim.

As surety bail bond agents undertake the responsibility of securing a person's appearance in court, the agent must also be mindful of the conditions of release imposed upon their client; and further, not inadvertently assist in the violation of one or more of the conditions. **Therefore, the OVA respectfully requests that Section 3 be amended as follows:**

On line 58, after "agents", insert the following: ", to include but not be limited to ethics; contracting; records and reporting; and domestic violence and orders of protection".

Thank you for consideration of my testimony and amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

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State Victim Advocate